India's exports have witnessed high growth rates during 2000-01 and 2002-03. The decline in export performance in 2001-02 is mainly due to global economic slowdown coupled with the impact of the events of September 11, 2001 and its aftermath. Despite the adverse global trading environment, in the first quarter of 2003-04 we have achieved 11.06% export growth. In the case of imports, most of the imports are either necessities for domestic consumption or imports needed for exports and industrial activity.

(d) Export promotion being one of the priorities of the Government, constant efforts are made by the Government to improve foreign trade of India by promoting exports. Based on the strategies contained in the Medium Term export Strategy 2002-07, announced in January, 2002, a number of programmes/schemes have been launched through the Union Budget, 2003-04 and Exim Policy, 2003-04. In the Exim Policy, 2003-04, besides, the focus on Service exports, policies have been devised to strengthen Special Economic Zones (SEZs), 100% Export Oriented Units (EOU's), etc. A new programme called "Focus CIS" has been introduced. Duty Neutralization Schemes for import of inputs used for export production have been strengthened.

Diamond cutting in Uttaranchal

†2256. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the locations of the diamond cutting centres in the country;

(b) whether Government are aware of the fact that the work of diamond cutting is being carried out at Haldwani, Uttaranchal also;

(c) if so, whether any action plan is being chalked out to boost up the diamond cutting work in the State; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) to (d) According to the Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council, an autonomous unit sponsored by the Ministry of Commerce, Government of India, the major diamond cutting centres in the country are located at

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Surat, Mumbai, Bhavnagar, Ahmedabad and Rajkot. There are many locations in India where artificial diamonds are being cut. The Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council does not deal with the industry concerning artificial diamonds.

Export of herbs from Uttaranchal

†2257. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) India's share in the export of herbs in the World market;

(b) Whether Government are aware of the immense scope of export of those herbs which are available in a large part of Uttaranchal;

(c) if so, whether Government would make any scheme to enhance production of these herbs with the help of the State Government; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) The global export figures of 'Herbs' are only available under the SITC Code 2924—plants and parts of plants primarily used for pharmacy, perfumery and insecticides (fresh, dried, powdered) and it is estimated that India's share in the global market of medicinal plants and plant products is over 12 percent in the year 2001. (Source—India Trades, CMIE for the identified 58 products).

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir.

(d) National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB), Department of Indian Systems of Medicines & Homeopathy has already introduced two types of schemes, *viz.*—Commercial and Promotional. For production of Herbal/medicinal plants, the NMPB has prioritized 32 plants which include plants of Uttaranchal too. During last two financial years i.e. 2001-02 and 2002-03, 36 projects have been sanctioned for conservation of cultivation of medicinal plants in Uttaranchal. Uttaranchal state has potential for export of herbs, in particular items like Chirata, Jata Mansi, Kuth, Kutki, Tagar, Van Kakdi, Lavender, Aconite, Kalihari and Sarpagandha. Government of India has already identified Uttaranchal for setting up an Agriculture Export Zones (AEZ) for medicinal plants.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.